

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3023

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4144

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT; MASS, MO

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ROYAL REACTION TO US STANCE ON SPANISH SAHARA:
MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND OTHER MATTERS

REFERENCE: STATE 182106

1. KING HASSAN, ACCORDING TO ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE IS PLEASED BY U.S. POSITION ON SPANISH SAHARA, AS CONVEYED BY SECRETARY TO FONMIN LARAKI AUGUST 7. (CF REFTEL). SINCE THAT TIME A COUPLE OF DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED SUGGESTING ENHANCED ROYAL CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES AND REINFORCEMENT OF THE KING'S PREVIOUS PROPENSITY TO SUPPORT WHAT HE PERCEIVES TO BE U.S. INTERESTS. IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE FIRM PREDICTIONS BUT THE DEVELOPMENTS THEMSELVES ARE WORTH NOTING.

2. SINCE AUGUST 7 MUSLO'S RELATIONS WITH MOROCCAN ARMY (RMA) HAVE CHANGED STRIKINGLY. EVER SINCE JULY 1971 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AT SKHIRAT, RMA HAS BEEN UNDER WRAPS. SENIOR OFFICERS WHO SURVIVED SKHIRAT
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WERE USUALLY ALMOST TOTALLY INACCESSIBLE TO PERSONNEL

OF THIS OR OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. MUSLO CHIEF HAD ACCESS ONLY TO TWO OR THREE TOP OFFICERS OF RMA FOR DISCUSSIONS OF ESSENTIAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN SUPPLY OF US EQUIPMENT FOR RMA MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. MUSLO OFFICERS SUBORDINATE TO CHIEF WERE DENIED ACCESS TO ALL RMA PERSONNEL. ON AUGUST 15, HOWEVER, MUSLO CHIEF WENT TO PREARRANGED MEETING WITH DEF MIN SEC GEN ACHAHBAR TO FIND HALF DOZEN KEY SENIOR OFFICERS OF RMA AWAITING HIM. THEY INDICATED URGENT INTEREST IN CUTTING THROUGH THEIR OWN RED TAPE AND REACHING AGREEMENT ON EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS BROADLY FORESEEN IN PARTAIN REPORT WHICH WAS HAMMERED OUT LAST WINTER. SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS, AS REPORTED INTER ALIA IN OUR 4117, SUSTAINED MOMENTUM GENERATED IN INITIAL MEETING AND RESULTED AMONG OTHER THINGS IN CATEGORICAL STATEMENT THAT KING WANTED MOROCCO TO GO AHEAD AND ACQUIRE THE EQUIPMENT, FINANCING WHAT IT COULD UNDER FMS CREDIT BUT PAYING CASH FOR THE BALANCE, WHATEVER COST MIGHT BE. AT PRESENT, SUBORDINATE MUSLO OFFICERS ARE MEETING ON ALMOST DAILY BASIS WITH THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS AT TECHNICAL LEVELS OF FAR.

3. ANOTHER POSSIBLE STRAW IN WIND IS KING'S REPORTED INTEREST IN HAVING AN AMERICAN FIRM BUILD A WATER DESALTING PLANT ON MOROCCO'S FAR SOUTHERN COAST (OUR 4132). BUSINESS REP WHO GAVE US THIS INFO SPECIFICALLY ATTRIBUTED KING'S INTEREST IN HAVING AMERICAN FIRM GET CONTRACT TO HIS SATISFACTION AT US POSITION ON SAHARA.

4. OBVIOUSLY KING MAY HAVE HAD MORE MOTIVES FOR INSTIGATING FOREGOING DEVELOPMENTS THAT JUST HIS PLEASURE AT OUR POSITION ON SAHARA. HOWEVER, IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT SECRETARY'S POSITION ON THAT ISSUE IS INTANGIBLY BUT SIGNIFICANTLY ASSISTING OUR EFFORTS TO PURSUE OUR BILATERAL INTERESTS IN MOROCCO. IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT HASSAN'S KNOWN DISPOSITION TO BE HELPFUL ON MATTERS RELATING TO MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WITHIN INTER-ARAB COUNCILS WILL BE SIMILARLY REINFORCED.

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